

Interracial News Service

A DIGEST OF TRENDS AND DEVELOPMENTS IN HUMAN RELATIONS

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America: — "the hope of the down-trodden and oppressed . . ."

DANIEL WEBSTER

TILLERS OF THE SOIL

Children of Misfortune

"Behold, the hire of the laborers who have reaped your fields, which is . . . kept back by fraud, crieth; and the cries of them which have reaped are entered into the ears of the Lord."

(JAMES 5:4)

A million migrants (workers) might make this text their indictment of the America they help to feed and clothe. They are - - -

"... children of misfortune. They are the rejects of those sectors of agriculture and of other industries undergoing change. We depend on misfortune to build up our force of migratory workers and when the supply is low because there is not enough misfortune at home, we rely on misfortune abroad to replenish the supply.

"Migratory farm laborers move restlessly over the face of the land, but they neither belong to the land nor does the land belong to them. They pass through community after community, but they neither claim the community as home nor does the community claim them. Under the law, the domestic migrants are citizens of the United States but they are scarcely more a part of the land of their birth than the alien migrants working beside them.

"The migratory workers engage in a common occupation, but their cohesion is scarcely greater than that of pebbles on the seashore. Each harvest collects and regroups them. They live under a common condition, but create no techniques for meeting common problems. The public acknowledges the existence of migrants, yet declines to accept them as full members of the community. As crops ripen, farmers anxiously await their coming; as the harvest closes, the community with equal anxiety, awaits their going." (*From Report of the President's Commission on Migratory Labor*, March 1951, p. 3.) Agricultural Relations Department, Council for Social Action, Merom, Ind.

Basic Legislation Needed

The strategy of the recommendations made by the President's Commission on Migratory Labor, according to *New York Times*, April 8, (1951) is based upon two fundamental premises:

1. That agriculture, like industry, is capable of providing decent jobs.
2. That the recurrent shortage of manpower for seasonal agricultural work is basically a problem of job standards.

Recommendations of the report included, according to *The Times*, a vital concern with the problems of:

A coordinated public program, the emergency, alien contract labor, "wetback" labor, recruitment of farm workers, labor relations, minimum wages, housing, unemployment compensation, health and welfare, child labor and education. . . .

Goodwill on Wheels

"Goowill on Wheels" is the title of an article in *The National Grange Monthly* by Louisa R. Shotwell, of the Division of Home Missions, National Council of Churches.

This "Goodwill on Wheels" is known as a Harvester. Actually it is a station wagon "specially fitted out for use in migrant farm labor camps. Its back drops down to reveal a screen and moving picture projector, a record player, balls and bats and horseshoes, books and magazines, a first aid kit, and a portable organ and folding altar. . . .

"Whether he houses them himself or draws on a labor supply center, every farmer who has found it necessary to employ migrants knows that life can become very complicated indeed. It may be not the least of his troubles that he suddenly finds himself unpopular in his home community. His neighbors resent the presence of the migrants, and they hold it against the farmer for bringing them in.

"Sometimes this community prejudice has a racial origin. Southern Negro families make up the big source of seasonal farm labor on the eastern seaboard, and in many communities in the middle and far west, the age-old Mexican stigma extends even to Spanish-speaking American citizens. Occasionally some residents have a genuine fear of these outsiders whose way of life may be different from theirs. Others develop a hostile feeling toward the farmer because they believe he has no interest in the well-being of the people he employs; they are ready to lay at the farmer's door the blame for all the hardships the migrant faces, from irregularity of employment to inadequate care of their children. . . ."

The matter in these pages is presented for the reader's information. It is not to be construed as reflecting the attitudes of the Department of Racial and Cultural Relations or of The National Council of Churches.

While no claim is made that the Harvester solves all or even the major portion of human problems in connection with mobile farm workers, on the other hand, it does become clearly evident that the broad comprehensive approach to human problems as indicated by the Harvester bids much in favor of a crop of goodwill to be shared by all who are related to this urgent endeavor.

* * *

RELIGION

National Council Action

The general board of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S.A. postponed action yesterday on a strong denunciation of racial segregation on the ground that "more time was needed to study."

The above statement appearing in the *New York Times* of March 22, was followed by literally dozens of . . . inquiries from a variety of sources.

Perhaps the swiftest action was taken by the Abyssinian Baptist Church in New York City. According to the *New York Times* of April 24, the "Communicants . . . voted at two regular services . . . to withdraw from the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S.A. . . .

The resolution adopted at the two services of the Abyssinian Baptist Church declared in its preamble that racial segregation "is the most acute question facing the world today." The postponement of action by the council executives was termed "an open breach upon the true tenets of Christianity." . . .

In response to the inquiries, . . . Dr. Samuel McCrea Cavert, General Secretary of the National Council of Churches, issued the following statement to members of the General Board of the National Council as well as to executives of state and local councils of churches, under date of March 26:

"We want to share with you, in view of the conflicting press reports, the facts concerning the status of the Statement on the Churches and Segregation now before the General Board of the National Council. There have been many inquiries from councils and members of constituent communities.

"For your information the facts are as follows:

"1. A 3,500 word Statement on the Churches and Segregation was adopted unanimously by the Department of Racial and Cultural Relations.

"2. The Statement was approved in principle by the Executive Board of the Division of Christian Life and Work in January and approved as revised on March 20.

"3. The Statement in its preliminary form was distributed to those members of the General Board attending its bi-monthly meeting in New York January 30, but no action was requested. Instead, Dr. Arthur Flemming, chairman of the Division, stated that the Executive Board of the Division was in general agreement with the principles enunciated and made the request that suggestions for changes be sent by members of the General Board to the Division by February 15. He expressed the hope that a revised draft incorporating the suggestions could be presented to the March meeting of the Board 'with the hope that final action may be taken at the Board's meeting in May.' (Subsequently the Board decided to postpone its meeting from May until June 11 on account of a conflict of dates with denominational assemblies.)

"4. A revised Statement, mailed to the members of the General Board prior to the meeting, was presented to the General Board at its meeting in New York March 21, upon behalf of the Division of Christian Life and Work by Dr. Gaines M. Cook. He acted in the absence of Dr. Flemming.

"5. Dr. John Q. Schisler, Nashville, Tenn., made a motion that action on the Statement be postponed until the next meeting in Chicago June 11. An extended debate followed in which several members participated, including Ralph W. Arkush, Bishop Frank Sterrett, Abbie Clement Jackson, I. A. Thomas, Ralph Lloyd and Hugh Chamberlin Burr. The officers of the Division of Christian Life and Work did not urge final action at this meeting. The motion to postpone action until the next session of the General Board was carried by a standing vote 27-15." ...

In a recent release to religious news and city editors, the Christian Social Relations Committee, Bronx Division, Protestant Council of the City of New York declared "... that every form and degree of racial discrimination and segregation — whether in employment, in courts of law, in housing, in social life, or in any other area — is a violation of the Spirit of Christ, a flagrant betrayal of His love for all men, a hindrance to true community, and an offense to Almighty God.

"Having said this, we are contrite to confess that the Christian Church is a chief offender. We repent of the sin of racial discrimination as practiced both within and outside the Church, and intend to promote with uncompromising word and will the integration of persons of every race and ancestry in our Churches and in our society on the basis of equality and mutual respect.

"We call upon the member churches of the Bronx Division of the Protestant Council of the City of New York to renounce the pattern of segregation and —

as proof of their sincerity — to stand and work vigorously for a non-segregated Church and a non-segregated society. Furthermore, we look with confidence to the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S.A. to take similar forthright action at an early date."

A Vote of Confidence

Pittsburgh, Penna. — By a vote of 81 to 45 the membership of Bethel Lutheran Church voted in favor of a non-segregated church, and in so doing gave their pastor a vote of confidence.

The Rev. Robert M. Herhold, 27, had submitted his resignation because a large part of the congregation had objected to his including Negro children in the church's Christian Activities Club, a program of recreation and education for youngsters in the neighborhood. Mr. Herhold had also invited the Negro youngsters to come to Sunday School.

The issues were clearly drawn at the meeting which voted on the church's future policy. Before the ballots were marked, Mr. Herhold answered "yes" unequivocally to such questions as: "Does this mean that Negroes can sit anywhere in the church? Will they be admitted to full membership?"

His program accepted, Mr. Herhold withdrew his resignation.

"This congregation has done the Christian thing," he said, "I believe that I can expect not just the toleration of members from all groups in the community, but the real Christian acceptance of men seeking God."

Mr. Herhold accepted the pastorate of the Bethel Church last July after having served two summers as a staff member of the East Harlem Protestant Parish, an interdenominational project under the auspices of the New York City Mission Society. (*Religious News Service*, April 7).

United, They Serve

Two Presbyterian churches (San Francisco) — one with an all-white congregation, the other all-Negro — have voted unanimously to merge and worship together, their pastors announced today.

Services will be conducted by Dr. Wesley L. Hawes, a Negro who has been pastor of the fast-growing Hope Presbyterian Church. His congregation will meet with the white worshippers of the more spacious Westminister Presbyterian some six blocks away. Because of population shifts the Westminister congregation has been dwindling in recent years. (*World-Telegram and Sun*, April 27).

* * *

SOUTH AFRICA A Power Struggle

Over a constitutional crisis far graver than it looks, the two major parties of white South Africa are desperately maneuvering toward a great prize: presumed control of this Union for many years to come.

The party in power is the Nationalist party of Prime Minister Daniel F. Malan, a former parson of the Dutch Reformed Church, which has a profound influence over South African life.

The opposition is the United Party, headed by J. G. N. Strauss. In its background, its basic motives, its financing and its intellectual leadership, it is essentially South African British. . . .

The two partisan positions are put forward roughly in this way: Nationalists—The "democratic" method is for the simple rule of parliament. United Party — A Parliament able to override any and all guarantees to the people would become the instrument of despotism.

What has not thus far been sketched is the human position. In a somewhat simplified way it is this:

The Nationalists, mostly descendants of Dutch settlers . . . were defeated fifty years ago by the British in the Boer War and, in their view, most cruelly treated.

They are thus desperately and locally patriotic, desperately anxious to see the end of any taint of British political influence.

Moreover, driven by their hard past and influenced by their predominant religious views, they are nakedly and totally racist, and there is no honest question but that in this they see something approaching a divine mission.

The Nationalists are on the whole not simply anti-black — as nearly every white man here is in the sense that he fears and represses the native blacks. They are in many cases anti-Briton, Anti-Jew, Anti-Catholic, Anti-Italian — anti most everybody but themselves, however harsh this may seem.

Among the United party there also is some racism going beyond the blacks, but not nearly so much nor is it so bitter. . . . (*New York Times*, April 14).

Human Rights Diminished

The difficulties in applying the Group Areas Act . . . have induced the Nationalist Government to put forth a bill amending the act, which created machinery for dividing South African cities into racial zones for exclusive white, black, Asian and colored (mixed blood) occupation.

The amendments are designed to facilitate the administration of the act, which has encountered serious obstacles.

One amendment enables the Government to define an area that it proposes to declare a group area for occupation or ownership by any one racial group. . . .

A far-reaching amendment authorizes the Government to determine the occupation of premises in conflict with title deed provisions.

The amending bill also proposes that a white man married to a native (Negro or colored woman for purposes of the act) will be regarded as native or colored.

Under existing legislation the woman follows the group of her husband, while the white man always keeps his group. . . . (New York Times, April 13).

300th Anniversary

South Africa began three weeks of festival this week-end to celebrate her 300th birthday, despite racial tension more severe than any in her history and the possibility of new race riots. . . .

The festival, which is billed by the Nationalist Government as the high mark of "300 years of progress," has drawn the fire of several African and Indian organizations which called for a boycott of the celebration on April 6 and asked for mass demonstrations. . . .

Pamphlets circulated in Capetown among non-white school children urging them not to attend the festival which "only gives thanks for 300 years of racial oppression."

Similar statements were issued by branches of the African National Congress, the principal representative body for the Africans, which told them participation in the festival was "tantamount to rejoicing over 300 years of slavery." . . . (New York Times, March 17).

In a report on the celebration day, April 6, *The Pittsburgh Courier* of April 12, stated that:

"Fear was having a field day here (Durban) Sunday as white South Africa gingerly celebrated its 300th anniversary of exploitation and settlement while simultaneously keeping a fist ready to smash any violence on the part of the nation's vast non-white population which seethed to the point of open revolt.

"For the first time in the history of the Union, a united front of 9,500,000 non-white elements cooperated in promoting nation-wide rallies in Capetown, Johannesburg, Port Elizabeth and Durban against overly repressive race laws. Even the 2,500,000 whites themselves were split on the issue. . . ."

Role of the Clergy

Dr. D. J. Devos, Minister of the break-away Fourth Dutch Reformed Church, charged today that 1,000 political clergymen ruled South Africa from behind the scenes. He said that they had forged South Africa's three old Dutch Reformed churches into a "lethal political machine" and carried out the instructions of the "twelve apostles" of the Afrikaner Broederbond.

Prime Minister Daniel F. Malan and sixty of the eighty Nationalist Members of Parliament are members of the Broederbond or Bond of Brothers. It was formed in 1919 and went underground early in the Thirties. It was denounced by two Prime Ministers now dead, Gen. J. B. M. Hertzog and Field Marshal Jan Christiaan Smuts. Marshal Smuts, who charged it was fascist, forbade civil servants to be members.

Dr. Malan, who says the Broederbond is an innocent cultural organization, rescinded Marshal Smuts' ban.

J. G. M. Strauss, opposition leader, has characterized the Broederbond as a "monstrosity." . . . (New York Times, April 9).

Toward the Future

A 20th Century version of the American "Spirit of '76" is epitomized in the words of one of the speakers at a meeting held under the African National Congress banner, *Freedom In Our Time*: "We'll not obey laws in which we have had no hand."

A "plan of action for defiance of unjust laws" was unfolded at meetings of non-white persons throughout the Union . . .

The meetings, which mark the first stage of a struggle between the white minority and urban elements of the non-white majority, were organized by the African National Congress, representing blacks; the South African Indian Congress, which contains strong Communist threads, and the Franchise Action Committee, also Communist-inclined, which represents for the most part colored persons (half castes) at Capetown.

As explained at the main Johannesburg gathering, the action plan is, first, for "trained people who understand the implications" to defy the pass laws, which restrict the free movement of blacks, and the Group Areas Act, which is designed to zone cities on racial lines.

After defiance of these laws, the selected group also would enter establishments such as libraries and use park benches reserved for "Europeans only." Thereafter the campaign will be expanded steadily until, its promoters hope, mass disobedience is achieved. . . . (New York Times, April 7).

Our Business, Too!

In an editorial under date of April 12, *The Amsterdam News* stated:

"South Africa is far, far, away, but what is happening there is our business, too — the business of all freedom-loving people in the United States; certainly the concern of Negro-Americans who know what racial proscription is, but who also have learned how to counteract the worst type of injustice and oppression.

"Just as important, however, is the fact that no people can remain free who are not interested in the freedom of others. Just as Americans are against starvation anywhere in the world, so they must be against slavery anywhere. In addition, in the frame of mind of the dominant class in the world, if one Malan can "get away" with subjugating the non-white people in South Africa, other greater or lesser Hitler-type monsters will make the same attempt. Even in America, some of our racists may try to imitate. . . .

"In the long run, Malan and his extreme racism will fail; but their fall can be hastened, with less suffering to the natives, if all people of goodwill lift their voices. It should also be good, long-term U. S. foreign policy. Why should Malan and his ilk be allowed to so arouse Africa and the rest of the colored world as to set up new seeds of war and destruction? Certainly no people will submit to Malanism and other forms of inquisition any longer than they have to. That is as true of South Africa as it is of the United States. We can help South Africa as we use our voice and vote to prevent our own nation from cuddling the Union and from closing its eyes to its savagery."

* * *

RESEARCH ON RACIALLY INCLUSIVE CHURCHES

A number of efforts have been made to develop local church programs which provide open participation for all persons in the church neighborhood regardless of racial origin.

Information on these efforts is now being assembled in a study of the process of racial inclusion as it is taking place in a large number of local churches.

The project was begun at the Center for Human Relations Studies, New York University, and was developed through the cooperative efforts of the Department of Racial and Cultural Relations, National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S.A., and social action divisions of three Protestant communions; namely, The United Lutheran Church in America, The Congregational Christian Churches, and the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A.

Questionnaires were mailed to 13,597 local churches. A total of 4,810 replies has been received from every state and from Alaska, Hawaii, Virgin Islands, Canada, Cuba and Puerto Rico.

Approximately 1,331 churches within these three communions reported membership or attendance of persons from more than one racial group. This permits a preliminary estimate that 9.8 per cent of all the churches in these communions have constituents from more than one racial group.

It should be pointed out that the 9.8 per cent is computed on the 13,597 churches, which is the combined number of all churches in the three denominations. It seems fair to assume that among the churches not responding to the inquiry there would be some instances of two or more races in the same congregation. Consequently, the percentage of 9.8, while statistically accurate, represents a conservative statement.

Some of the data on the Congregational Christian churches come from an earlier (1946) survey by L. Maynard Catchings.

Additional data is being gathered through questionnaires and case studies.

This material will furnish data for an analysis of the processes by which persons of various racial backgrounds have been included at the local church level of these Protestant communions. The information

will serve as a basis for deriving and clarifying principles which appear to be operative in bringing about various types of racial inclusion in churches. (Report from *The City Church*, March, 1952).

* * *

NEW STATES?

If the opponents of statehood for Alaska and Hawaii ever had any really convincing arguments time and events have long since passed them by. Both Territories want statehood; both Territories morally, economically and politically deserve statehood; both Territories are prepared for statehood, and sooner or later both Territories are going to get it. . . .

In previous Congresses the House has twice voted to admit Hawaii, and once to admit Alaska. It is the Senate that has always blocked the way. One reason is that the group opposing civil rights fears that the four new Senate votes might swing the balance against them. This is probably the worst possible reason for preventing the Territories from becoming states, but it has been an effective one. If filibuster once again proves successful it will mean another defeat for the essential principles of American government and another victory for the narrowminded racist sectionalism that represents nothing but a decaying past. (Editorial *New York Times*, February 6).

* * *

PROTECTION AGAINST VANDALISM

A bill (HR 6587) to provide protection against vandalism committed on account of racial or religious prejudice was introduced by Mr. Heller in the House of Representatives and has been referred to the Committee on the Judiciary. The bill reads in part:

"Whoever damages any place of worship, dwelling, or other property, real or personal, out of malice toward any race or religion, or with intent to ridicule, intimidate, or otherwise injure any person on account of his race or religion, shall be fined not more than \$1,000 or imprisoned not more than one year, or both, except that whoever in violating this section causes the death or bodily injury of any person shall be punished by death."



MOST SO-CALLED REASONING CONSISTS IN FINDING ARGUMENTS FOR GOING ON BELIEVING AS WE ALREADY DO.

(Used by permission of the author and illustrator, Frank Hanley.)

ACHIEVEMENT AND RECOGNITION

Achievement as a Negro American has a decreasing degree of uniqueness due to the ever-increasing frequency with which Negroes have won recognition and achievement on the basis of individual merit and worth. Consequently, the reporting of the following events represents random items of news and not a careful gleaning of selection from among the literally hundreds of such instances reported over a two-month period.

— — —

A Southern white hospital announced . . . the appointment of a Negro physician to its medical staff. It was believed to be one of the first such appointments in the South.

Mount Sinai Hospital . . . extended staff privileges to 32-year-old Dr. Aubrey W. Henry and assigned him to the care of Negro patients. Dr. Henry recently became the first Negro member of the Dade County (Florida) Medical Association. . . . (*New York Times*, March 30.)

— — —

Battalion Chief Wesley Williams of the Fifteenth Battalion, the Bronx (New York City), the first Negro to be an officer in the Fire Department, retired recently after thirty-three years as a city fire-fighter. He is 55 years old and the highest ranking fire officer of his race in the country. . . . (*New York Times*, March 27).

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Mr. Wiley A. Hall, Executive Secretary of the Richmond Urban League, was recently recommended unanimously by a Richmond, Virginia City Council Committee to become a member of the Planning Commission, according to a *Richmond Times-Dispatch* news report of January 12.

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The New York Times of March 5, reports that West Newbury, Massachusetts, a village of 1,500, elected its only Negro voter as Town Moderator. He is Julian D. Steele, 45-year-old professional social worker and honor graduate of Harvard.

— — —

Announcement was made (recently) of the appointment of Herbert T. Miller . . .

as associate secretary of the Manhattan division of the Protestant Council of the City of New York. . . .

Mr. Miller, who is the first Negro in the United States to have served as a county grand jury foreman, has been in social service since 1926. He was drawn for the Kings County (N. Y.) grand jury in 1944. (*New York Times*, March 2).

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The Rev. Theodore J. Jones, thirty-nine, was instituted . . . as rector of St. Andrew's Protestant Episcopal Church, 2067 Fifth Avenue (New York City), by the Right Rev. Horace W. B. Donegan, Bishop of New York. Father Jones, who has been serving the parish since Nov. 29, is its first Negro rector. . . . (*New York Herald Tribune*, April 7).

* * *

A LITTLE LIGHT IN THE CORNER

How would you cure an elephant of insomnia?

Assuming that you would want to cure an elephant of insomnia, Aristotle, the renowned Greek philosopher, suggested that you rub its shoulders with salt, olive oil and warm water. Aristotle also said that the blood of females was blacker than that of males. But don't laugh yet. Some of us "moderns" actually believe that a man's value as a citizen or a neighbor has something to do with the place where he was born, or the color of his skin. . . . Both superstitions have just as much basis in fact. (From *The Community Attitudes Committee*, Council for Civic Unity, San Francisco, Calif., April 1952).

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While Aristotle applied the spirit of precise inquiry tirelessly within the field of mathematical science, he omitted much to be desired of this same spirit in other areas which came under his scrutiny.

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